Comprehensive Examination for Educational Technology Leadership Internship

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**Comprehensive Exam**

Technology competency is not a skill set that, once mastered, is static; rather, it is highly fluid, changing at the pace of technological innovation (Williamson 2009). Technology can be used in the classroom to enhance the learning of students with diverse needs. A classroom today may have students with learning, physical, and/or emotional disabilities. As we understand how students learn, digital tools can help provide the support these diverse learners need. Even with the most structured learning goals educators can provide the flexibility necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners. One way is to use the four practices that Prensky listed to make education relevant to students' lives and truly prepare kids for the future. It is unclear what path technology literacy assessments will take in the future. Some forecast that full-scale implementation of rigorous technology literacy assessments--whether stand-alone or integrated into current high-stakes exams in other content areas--may be almost a decade from full-scale implementation. Until then, it will be the role of technology facilitators and leaders to sustain and propel the work until meaningful, high-quality solutions are readily available (Williamson 2009).

**Position Goals**

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We now have the opportunity to teach students to be lifelong learners and create their own independent learning practice they can carry with them (Richardson 2007). Richardson (2007) also says one of the most profound shifts we are undergoing is the move from a passive, consumer-based culture to a participatory, production-based culture. To continue to approach schooling from a content delivery model puts us at risk quickly becoming irrelevant. My position goal is to advance to teaching high school technology classes and eventually college courses in the summer. Eventually, I would like an administrative position in the area of Instructional Technology.

**Leadership Goals**

Richardson (2007) says learning is now a 24/7/365 activity. The job of the educator is to prepare the student for lifelong learning and give a foundation to answer questions, solve problems, or at least know how to find the solution. Technology is evolving and students should be able to adapt. That means that instructors should be able to pass this knowledge on to their students.

Prensky (2001) said today's teacher's have to learn to communicate in the language and style of their students. We have to find ways to incorporate the "traditional" curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic with "future" digital and technological methods. Our professional development and staff meetings will have to reflect this.

The leadership goals I have set for myself are to remain a technology leader on my campus as a beginning and then expand district wide. This is already beginning as I’ve been selected to lead a district professional development training this summer. Young people may be ahead of us in using tools, but leaders like you will help them use the tools in educationally appropriate ways (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). Current issues related to digital equity, online safety, copyright, and other social, ethical, legal, and human issues require that technology facilitators and leaders structure technology use and educate parents, educators, and students about key issues (Williamson 2009).

**Horizon Report**

Beldarrain (2006) said that time is of the essence for both, learners and instructors, activities and content must be relevant and up to date. The 2011 *Horizon Report* lists the technological trends it expects to see emerge within the next few months to five years. Just as these items become more mainstream and available, so must educational leaders training.  Web 2.0 tools are about writing, communities, peer to peer, and XML (Lanclos 2009).  A few years ago, I had never heard of Jing, Twitter, Wordle, Moodle and some of the other tools that are now a staple in elementary technology education.  There is nothing wrong with learning a few aspects as you go, but someone must be able to help guide students who become lost or confused.

The first item listed in the *Horizon* report includes electronic books such as the Kindle and iPad.  These items will no longer be toy gadgets for adults, but learning tools for children. As the electronic book moves further from a digital reproduction of a printed piece, some writers are seeing it become something far richer, allowing journeys through worlds real and imagined (Johnson 2011).

Johnson (2011) says mobiles embody the convergence of several technologies that lend themselves to educational use, including electronic book readers, annotation tools, applications for creation and composition, and social networking tools. From Twitter to Poll Everywhere, mobiles allow very simple tools to be easily integrated into classroom activities with no need for involvement of IT or support staff. During one of our staff developments held at the beginning of the school year, a speaker used Poll Everywhere with us as a demonstration.

The second adoption *Horizon* considers technologies expected to gain widespread usage within two to three years, and this year’s candidates are augmented reality and game-based learning. Examples are the Nintendo Wii, Xbox Kinect and Sony's Playstation with Move.  These devices that are controlled by natural movements of the finger, hand, arm, and body are becoming more common, although their use in the classroom setting is still being developed.

The future of learning will involve collaborative education with students finding information on their own.  Researchers and developers are just beginning to gain a sense of the cognitive and cultural dimensions of gesture-based communicating, and the full realization of the potential of gesture-based computing within higher education will require intensive interdisciplinary collaborations and innovative thinking about the very nature of teaching, learning, and communicating (Johnson 2011).

**Knowledge Gained**

The job of the educator is to prepare the student for lifelong learning and give a foundation to answer questions, solve problems, or at least know how to find the solution. My technology skills have vastly improved from when I started this course about 18 months ago. I’ve been exposed to all types of software, projects, and ideas that I never knew existed. I’ve been sharing what I’ve learned with the other Technology Applications teacher to hopefully incorporate these new lessons next school year.

I never really considered myself much of a leader, but others around me seem to. I would always be elected team captain for sports when I younger. I was recently asked to help lead a workshop for summer continuing education hours using the Intel training that had been chosen to receive two years ago. My principal also sent me to RSCCC grade book training to help my colleagues learn how to use the new system. This course has helped me think outside of the box. I find myself looking at movie posters, magazine ads, and even newspapers differently thanks to the four principles of design listed by Yearwood. My knowledge base has improved due to the information I’ve acquired through all of the courses.

My attitude regarding special education and my administration (campus and district) has changed as well. I was able to get a glimpse into what they go through daily both legally and financially.

**Six Courses**

This entire program and experience has been an invaluable journey for me, so to narrow it down to six is difficult. The classes that I believe that helped me are EDLD 5301 Research Methods; EDLD 5333 Leadership Accountability; EDLD 5344 School Law; EDLD 5363 Video Multimedia Technology; EDLD 5364 Teaching with Technology; and EDLD 5366 Graphic Design & Desktop Publishing.

The title of this class is a little intimidating, but for EDLD 5301 Research Methods, I've learned that action research is an ongoing process. It is not something that you can do once and leave it. The information obtained and used must be monitored and updated as needed.   
As a technology applications teacher, I had the opportunity to get some exposure to action research last year by being apart of my district's technology committee. We met monthly to figure out ways to get our district up to speed in Web 2.0 tools. Per our superintendent's goal of having all teachers and staff know basic computer skills within the next two school years, we are also responsible for taking any new software or product knowledge applications back to our campuses to share. A more recent project I had was obtaining donations for a reward program called Project REACH. My partner and I had to look into the legal aspects, present it to the principal for approval, and market it to the students. Now, that the school year is winding down, the final phase of the project is to see if the program increased grades and attendance for the year.

In EDLD 5333 Leadership Accountability, I have learned a great deal through this course and how I can do more than I thought to improve scores. This course has helped me get out of my tunnel vision of being a currently non-TAKS testing subject. Driven by the serious consequences of school accountability, school improvement is the focal point in the community of professional educators (Jones). I will do more to be actively involved and offer support to the other department and teachers in any way I can.   
We will use whatever methods are working and tweak or eliminate those that are not. We continue to use benchmark and six weeks test scores as checkpoints to see if we are track to our target goal. We will continue to keep the community and parents involved and recruit even harder those we haven’t included yet. We will also continue to share our successes with the public.

With EDLD 5344 School Law, the assignments of using Joseph and his IEP were very relevant because our district is currently in a legal suit over an issue with a special education student. Also, Teacher evaluations are important for both the teacher and district. The principal represents the district to ensure that the employees hired are doing their jobs effectively. Knowing my rights as a term contract employee and what does cover me helps me doing my job better.

EDLD 5363 Video Multimedia Technology allowed me to use Photo Story, which I really enjoyed. The group assignment given for this course really incorporated Richardson's Seven C's of Learning, especially with regard to collaboration/cooperation, creation/contribution, and communication. Williamson (2009) says that technology facilitators and leaders need an extensive repertoire of knowledge, skills, and dispositions firmly grounded in theories and research on effective instruction, classroom management, adult learning, and conceptual change.

EDLD 5364 Teaching with Technology has given tools to better understand my students. Technology can be used in the classroom to enhance the learning of students with diverse needs. A classroom today may have students with learning, physical, and/or emotional disabilities. As we understand how students learn, digital tools can help provide the support these diverse learners need. The Universal Design for Learning supports individual learning by recognizing and minimizing barriers through the recognition (what of learning), strategic (how of learning), and affective (why of learning) networks. Multimedia tools such as Kidspiration, PowerPoint, and text-to-speech software offer choices for students and help build examples that suit their instructional needs. To provide practice and feedback for students, digital tools such as word processing applications, class response systems, and the internet. In order to meet diverse needs we must also give students the opportunity to pursue their interests. Using videos, Webquests, and virtual simulation will increase their enthusiasm for learning. Even with the most structured learning goals educators can provide the flexibility necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners.

EDLD 5366 Graphic Design & Desktop Publishing has helped me think outside of the box. I find myself looking at movie posters, magazine ads, and even newspapers differently thanks to the four principles of design listed by Yearwood: repetition, alignment, proximity, and contrast. For the logo and newsletter assignments, I tried to incorporate these elements throughout. Once again, this class came at a perfect time as I had started helping a co-worker make brochures and get web ideas for her new business. However, the most interesting and anticipated assignment for me was the animation. I’ve been aware of Scratch for a few years, but was never really able to incorporate in my lessons due to lack of time. Richardson (2007) says we can create and publish as easily as we read, and we must teach our students to leverage this ability and add their own work to the global conversation in meaningful ways. I learned a great deal from the tutorials provided and I am now motivated to try to find the time to use this program.

**Overall Course Program Reflection**

This program has provided me such valuable information to help me with my career that I can’t describe it. I never knew what to expect with some of the courses on the weekly assignments, but each one was an eye-opener. All of the courses provided useful information and the professors/instructional associates were very helpful and professional. I’ve recommended this program to my colleague. Over the past eighteen months, I’ve been able to self-assess my strengths and weaknesses. I was very fortunate to have this opportunity and will use what I’ve learned to help my students and colleagues.

**Three Year Professional Development Plan**

Currently, the curriculums of the past—the “legacy” part of our kids’ learning—are interfering with and cutting into the “future” curriculum—the skills and knowledge that students need for the 21st century (Prensky 2005/2006). One of the items that my colleague and I are planning to do for next year is add more Web 2.0 tools to our lessons. We want to start with wikis and blogs since our course is just a semester. Warlick (2007) says that many teachers have adopted wikis to provide their students with opportunities for collaborating in conducting research, processing what they learn, and expressing their findings to wider audiences. We have purchased a couple of workbooks and will use this summer to take continuing education course that focus on Web 2.0 tools in the classroom.

The second and third year of professional development will probably include most of the same duties as year one, but as we face budget cuts and hiring freezes, my role and job assignments will probably change. I’m sure that with me having this degree, I will be one of the first ones my principal comes to when he needs technology integrated staff developments. The main focus of those three years will be to ensure all my students have what the need to succeed.

Jo Ann Guilford

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Royse City Middle School - Royse City, TX July 2002 – Present**

*Technology Applications & Exploring Careers Teacher*

*7th & 8th Grade Girls Athletic Coach*

* Creates lesson plans based on state-adopted TEKS
* Serves as the Technology department leader
* Evaluates student performance
* Serves on campus interview committee
* Coordinates the Project REACH student reward program for perfect attendance and passing grades
* Attends various professional development workshops and sessions
* Communicates with all educational stakeholders via e-mail, phone, and website
* Collaborates with other departments for cross-curriculum activities and projects
* Promotes good sportsmanship, team work, and work ethic to student-athletes
* Participates as a member of RCISD Technology Advisory Committee
* Represents RCMS as a member of RCISD Computer Advisory Committee
* Serve on RCMS Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Committee
* Participates as a member of RCMS Summer School, Attendance, & Retention Committee
* Provides tutoring for students in need
* Received RCMS Teacher of the Month (February 2009 and October 2006)

**EDUCATION, AWARDS, & CERTIFICATIONS**

* Master’s of Educational Technology Leadership Lamar University

(To be completed in May 2011) Beaumont, Texas

* Bachelor of Science- Business Administration/Kinesiology Texas A&M- Commerce

August 1995- May 1999 Commerce, Texas

* Secondary Basic Business and Physical Education certification
* Intercultural Services Outstanding Service Award (April 1999)
* Intercultural Services Academic Achievement Award (April 1999)
* Texas A&M-Commerce Dean’s List (Fall 1998)
* Texas A&M- Commerce Dean’s List (Fall 1996)
* Intel Master Teacher Training Region 10 ESC

June 2009 Richardson, Texas

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

* Association of Texas Professional Educators
* Texas Girls Coaches Association
* Texas Association of Basketball Coaches

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

* Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Publisher, Access)
* Internet Explorer
* Cross Tec Monitoring software
* UDL Book Builder
* Photo Story
* Audacity
* Web 2.0 tools
* Wordle

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